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FROM STATISTICAL TO EMOTIONAL MENTALITY:
SENTENTIAL SIMPLICITY AND COMPLEXITY IN GRADGRIND'S SPEECH IN CHARLES
DICKENS'S *HARD TIMES*

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at statistically scrutinizing the type of sentences used in the dramatic passages uttered by the dynamic character Mr. Gradgrind in Dickens' *Hard Times* in an attempt to reflect how his development is reflected through his language throughout the novel. In other words, it shows how the dynamicity of his character is reflected by the distributional difference between complex, simple and minor sentences used in his dramatic speeches with the other characters throughout the novel. This can help us understand the purpose of using complex or simple sentences in spoken or written language in general. The dynamicity of Gradgrind can be seen in three phases: before change, in the process of change and after change. For the statistical analysis of sentence types, the researcher adopts Leech et al.'s (1982) binary classification of sentences according to the number of clauses: either simple or complex sentences. This statistical analysis provides the frequencies and percentages of the occurrence of each sentence type Gradgrind's speeches in the three phases. Then, these percentages are compared and contrasted in an attempt to reach a conclusion.

Keywords: character development, Dickens, Gradgrind, linguistics, *Hard Times*, sentence type

1. Introduction

Leech et al.'s (1982) classify sentences into two types: "(a) a single clause, in which case it is known as a SIMPLE SENTENCE; or of (b) more than one clause, in which case it is known as a COMPLEX SENTENCE" (p. 93). They add that the complexity of sentences can be shown either by coordination or by subordination of clauses. This classification is used in this paper to highlight Gradgrind's character development through the simplicity and complexity of his sentences.

In *Hard Times*, Mr. Thomas Gradgrind is one of the major dynamic characters. He is a father of five children whose heads he tries to fill with facts. He is also a headmaster in the school of facts where all the pupils, including his children, are forced to "reason" everything around them and to dispose of "Fancy" and "Imagination." Gerber (1954, p. 352) believes that when reading *Hard Times*, the reader may view characters in two terms as follows:

To the first term he may relate the words 'simple,' 'consistent,' 'monomaniac,' As examples he might name Bounderby and Bitzer, Mrs. Gradgrind, and perhaps Stephen Blackpool and Rachael. To the second term he might relate words 'complex' and 'inconsistent,' emphasizing that such characters usually change as the result of experience. As illustrations, Louisa and Mr. Gradgrind may be noted. These characters will best serve to illustrate the major narrative element, the definition and failure of the Gradgrind.

The simplicity and consistency of Gradgrind's character at the beginning of the novel and his change to a complex and inconsistent character at the end can be reflected through the sentential simplicity and complexity in his dramatic speeches with the other characters in the novel.

Gradgrind's Dynamicity in Light of Sentential Simplicity and Complexity

The scrutinized sample of Gradgrind's speech consists of 230 sentences classified into three parts:

1. sentences in Gradgrind's speech before change, which amount up to 74;
2. sentences in Gradgrind's speech in the process of change, which amount up to 77; and
3. sentences in Gradgrind's speech after change, which amount up to 79.

1. Pre-change Phase

At the beginning of the novel, Mr. Gradgrind is portrayed as a "man of realities" (Dickens 4; bk.1, ch. 2). "Facts," the first word uttered by him, crystallizes his statistical mentality. He is depicted by Dickens as a "cannon loaded to the muzzle with Facts" (5; *ibid.*). As a father, he is not described as bad, but he is a good father who takes care of his children's education. However, this paternal consideration, as Hughes (2013, p. 66) maintains, "can never take the place of sympathy." He adds that "an ounce of true sympathy is worth a ton of consideration to a child." That is why he regards Gradgrind to be "kind and helpful to his children ... most considerate for them, and spared no money to promote their welfare and happiness" (*ibid.*). However, Davis (1999, p. 172) states that Gradgrind's Utilitarian character makes him see his children not as "as living creatures filled with wonder, but rather as empty vessels to be stuffed with facts." As an educator, he is that stubborn teacher who sticks only to his own opinions and is, as Hughes (2013, p. 121) mentions, "so sure he was right in his views regarding child training that he founded a school to teach the children of Coketown in accordance with what he believed to be correct principles."

Table 1.1. Sentence Types in Gradgrind's Speech before Change

Sentence Type	Total	%
Complex sentences	28	37.83 %
Simple sentences	34	45.95 %
Minor sentences	12	16.22 %
Total	74	100 %

Table 1.1. indicates that the highest percentage of Gradgrind's sentences is devoted to the simple sentences (45.95%). Then, complex sentences rank second with 37.8 %, followed by the minor-sentence type which represents about 16.2 %.

Out of these 34 simple sentences, 15 sentences are used in Gradgrind's speech with his pupils in the school; 13 with his children (Louisa and Tom) in the circus and at home; and 6 with Sissy Jupe (a daughter of the circus performer who comes later in the novel to live with Gradgrind's family). However, only 6 simple sentences are employed in his speech with Bounderby. He uses these simple sentences either **(a)** to impose a rule or state a direct fact as he does with the pupils in the school, "Facts alone are wanted in life" (3; bk.1, ch. 1); or **(b)** to give direct orders as he does with his children in the circus: "Say not another word" (15; bk.1, ch. 3) and "I will hear no more" (15; bk.1, ch. 3); or **(c)** to display direct rejection for imagination as he does with Sissy: "That is enough" (53; bk.1, ch. 7).

On the other hand, Gradgrind cannot be direct with Bounderby, an old materialistic person who adopts the philosophy of facts, after catching Louisa and Tom in the circus. He is worried about Bounderby's reaction when he hears about that foolish, "childish" (15; bk.1, ch. 3) and irrational conduct. This worry is represented in his final sentences with Louisa before he talks to Bounderby: when he repeats three times to Louisa "what would Bounderby say?" (16; bk.1, ch. 3). This could be among the causes why most of his sentences with Bounderby are complex. He is so perplexed that he uses complex and long sentences in his speech with Bounderby to evade telling him this bitter truth about his children, especially Louisa. He tries hard with these complex sentences to justify this act to him. The complexity of sentences in his speech parallels the psychological complexity and turbulence that he undergoes due to this shock: "you are always so interested in my young people- particularly in Louisa- that I make no apology for saying to you, I am very much *vexed* [emphasis added] by this discovery" (21; bk.1, ch. 4). The complex sentences used could also signify the complexity of the topic being discussed.

It is also noticeable that in the pre-change phase the number of the simple sentences to the complex sentences in his speech with Sissy at home is 6:7. His speech with her sometimes tends to be persuasive, i.e. in the part in which he uses complex sentences. At other times it tends to address her intellect and fill it with facts about her present educational state which she is not convergent with and which calls for an urgent reformation. This can be seen in the part in which he uses declarative and imperative simple sentences.

2. In-change Phase

In the second phase of his development, Gradgrind's personality encounters some fortune ups and downs. Thoroddsen (2011, p. 5) believes that Gradgrind's "philosophy of facts and fancy, however, changes significantly during the course of the novel." Time passes and it leaves its marks on the personality of Gradgrind. This is clear when we come to analyze his conversation with Louisa in which he tries to convince her to marry Bounderby. For Gradgrind, Bounderby's proposal of marriage to Louisa cannot be imposed but it should be discussed. In order to win the discussion, Gradgrind acts differently and tries to be persuasive. This persuasive technique assists his argument. However, Hughes (2013) contends that Gradgrind in this speech is so "practical and so self-opinionated that he could not see his daughter's "heart was breaking while she was yielding with external calmness" (p. 124).

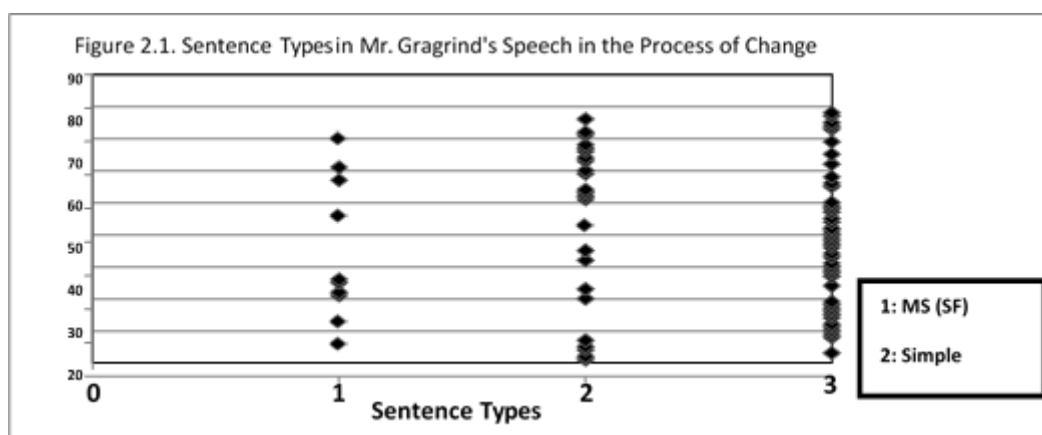
Table 2.1. Sentence Types in Gradgrind's Speech in the Process of Change

Sentence Type	Total	%
Complex sentences	43	55.8%
Simple sentences	22	28.6%
Minor sentences	12	15.6%
Total	77	100 %

Table 2.1. shows that more than half Gradgrind's sentences (55.8%) are complex. Simple sentences are also used, but for different purposes here.

According to the statistical analysis of Gradgrind's sentences, most of the simple sentences are used at the beginning of Gradgrind's speech with Louisa and near the end.

This is illustrated in Figure 2.1. where the sentence types used by Gradgrind in his conversation with Louisa about the marriage proposal are charted.



Generally speaking, it is noticeable that the simple sentences are more frequent at the beginning and at the end of the conversation. However, the rest of the scatter plot is allotted for the complex sentences. This scatter paradigm of sentence types may help us interpret the logical development of Gradgrind's speech in order to achieve the purpose of this long talk. According to the chart, we may divide this long speech into three parts:

- a) the beginning: preparing for the topic,
- b) the middle: the argument, and
- c) the end: confirming the result.

Most of the sentences in parts *a* and *c* are simple, while most of those in part *b* are complex.

Out of this statistical interpretation, we can come up with the assumption that Gradgrind is a persuasive person. He follows this sentential paradigm to persuade Louisa of Bounderby's proposal of marriage. At the beginning, it is obvious that he employs simple sentences to prepare Louisa for the topic in hand. Thus, the simple sentences at the beginning are meant to: (i) set a lot of store by the topic: "I must speak with you alone and seriously" (102; bk.1, ch. 14), (ii) prepare the setting of the conversation: "Come to me in *my room after breakfast tomorrow* [emphasis added]" (ibid.), and (iii) reassure himself about her psychological and physical readiness for this conversation: "Are you not well?" (ibid.).

On the other hand, part *b* depicts the argumentative style of Gradgrind's speech. He argues with Louisa about the topic in question. That is why the sentential complexity is more frequent in the middle of the scatter chart above, where the argument is going on. This argument is quite fruitful because it attains the goals it aims at. Here comes the question: how do these complex sentences support Gradgrind's argument? To answer this question, one should trace this speech to find out how it is developed and how the complex sentences therein serve the stylistic purposes they are used for.

First, the beginning of the argument is to the point since it aims to pave the way for Louisa to the topic by eulogizing her good sense, education, understanding and reason: "You have been so well trained, and you do, I am happy to say, so much justice to the education you have received, that I have perfect confidence in your good sense" (106; bk.1, ch. 15). So, the complex sentences are intended here to address Louisa's intellect and emotion too. This is one of the successful techniques in the art of persuasion, and it indicates how cunning Gradgrind is.

Second, a group of complex sentences is uttered by Gradgrind in this argument with the aim of enclosing the topic – being an emotional one - with many embeddings in order to eschew the direct attachment to it:

I have undertaken then to let you know that —in short, that Bounderby has informed me that he has long watched your progress with particular interest and pleasure, and has long hoped that the time might ultimately arrive when he should offer you his hand in marriage. (107; ibid.)

This indirectness may cause some confusion on the part of the listener. However, this may "be a deliberate ploy by the person using the sentence as they may intend to cause that confusion in order that they can slip something past the listener's attention and hence get something accepted without challenge" ("changingminds," 2002-2014). Tannen (1993, p. 223) maintains that two benefits of indirectness are "rapport" and "defensiveness". By rapport, she means "the lovely satisfaction of being understood without explaining oneself, of getting what one wants without asking for it" (ibid.). By defensiveness, she means "the need to be able to save face by reneging in case one's conversational contribution is not received well." (ibid.). Hence, the indirectness of Gradgrind that may be provided by syntactic subordination and coordination can function as a protective armor to save him from a direct confrontation with Louisa about an emotional topic like marriage.

Third, Gradgrind resorts to complex sentences to support his own point of view with evidence such as personal experience and statistics: "In considering this question, it is not unimportant to take into account the statistics of marriage, so far as they have yet been obtained, in England and Wales" (108; bk.1, ch. 15). Weiss and Weiss (2012, chapter 12) demonstrates that "the most engaging and argumentative sentences are *grammatically complex*." They make speech stronger and more persuasive. This is simply because such sentences provide "details about the nature of the issue [being argued about]," and they also provide the listener with "supporting evidence (comparison, analogy, authority, quotations, statistics, personal experiences, etc.)" (Bannister, 2004, p. 53).

Fourth, defending his opinion, Gradgrind devotes some of the complex sentences to refute the other points of view which do not go along with his own: "The ignorant and the giddy may embarrass such subjects with irrelevant fancies, and other absurdities that have no existence, properly viewed — really no existence — but it is no compliment to you to say, that you know better" (108; bk.1, ch. 15). The great effect of complex sentences in arguments can reside in the fact that they may include "a careful analysis of the opponent's argument" just to convince him that the issue has been thought through carefully (Bannister, 2004, pp. 53-54). Out of this process of supporting the argument or the claim with rich details, sentential complexity is created. In his book *Simple and Direct* Jacques Barzun (as cited in Weiss, 2005, p. 67) reached the conclusion that "the sentences richest in meaning and content, the sentences that distil and conclude, are complex sentences."

Once the aim of this argument is achieved (i.e., —Since Bounderby likes to take me thus, I am satisfied to accept his proposal" (110; bk.1, ch. 15)), the tone of the speech needs to be slowed down. This one-sided conversation ends with some simple sentences fallen from Gradgrind's lips in an attempt to mitigate the pressing effect of the preceding complex sentences. Consequently, the simple sentences are mouthed to praise her "proper" decision and inquire about her "wish in reference to the period of [her] marriage" (ibid.).

Despite Louisa's immediate consent to the marriage proposal, Gradgrind still feels that her answer lacks complete conviction especially when she expresses her indifference to the whole issue afterwards: "What does it matter!" (ibid.). He wants to receive a full consent. According to him, what may affect her decision is love. The situation then necessitates asking her a completely emotional question. Hence, he feels it incumbent upon him to devalue this question in advance in a complex sentence: "Louisa, I have not considered it essential to ask you one question, because the possibility implied in it appeared to me to be too remote" (ibid.). However, when her answer reassures him to some extent, he does not have any desire to argue any other topic or use long complex sentences. As the simple sentences at the beginning serve to praise Louisa's good reason and sense in order to emotionally draw her to listen to him, they come at the end of this argument to function as extolment to pay the tribute to her rational split-second decision which is truly made by him: "My dear Louisa, you correct me justly" (ibid.) and "My dear Louisa, you abundantly repay my care" (111; ibid.). To confirm the result, Gradgrind finalizes the talk uttering some complex sentences in an attempt to justify for Louisa what she does not try to justify for herself. This denotes his uncertainty about how much she is convinced with this argument: "Bounderby is a very remarkable man; and what little disparity can be said to exist between you — if any — is more than counterbalanced by the tone your mind has acquired" (ibid.).

3. Post-change phase

The dictatorial image of Gradgrind begins to fade out once he recognizes his own mistakes and how his principles of facts are misleading. Thoroddsen (2011, p. 15) maintains that "the Utilitarian education of facts begins to falter when Gradgrind realizes that his daughter is in pain and that she, in her agony, has come to him."

In the first conversation between Gradgrind and Louisa after her marriage, Louisa's agonizing story of marriage "moves Gradgrind as Sissy's story moved Louisa in childhood" (Bodenheimer, 1991, p. 203). Hence, the failure of his daughter's marriage shakes up all his beliefs. This confrontation leads Gradgrind to a self-confrontation where he "begins to realize that his system of education may not be what he thought it was – perfect" (Essays, UK, 2013, para. 7). His second confrontation with his daughter can depict the change he undergoes. Watts (1981, p. 163) believes that "during this conversational exchange, much of which is in fact a confession by Gradgrind The reader is expected to believe that he means his confession sincerely." Gradgrind's mental change can be felt also in his speech with Bounderby with whom Gradgrind used to share his ideologies of Utilitarianism and Factualism. In this respect, Bodenheimer (1991, p. 205) points out that "unlike Bounderby, he [Gradgrind] revises his account of things when he is confronted with 'what has happened.' His change, which ages him significantly, is ... a corresponding acceptance of emotion as a force in its making."

Hence, in order to trace the change that Gradgrind undergoes, we should analyze the statistical data of the frequent occurrence of simple and complex sentences in three of his conversations, two of which are with Louisa while the third with Bounderby. Table 3.1. provides the frequencies and percentages of sentence types in these three conversations.

Table 3.1. Sentence Types in Gradgrind's Speeches after Change

	Gradgrind's Speech		Simple Sentences	Complex Sentences	Minor Sentences	Total
Part 1	First speech with Louisa		2	3	8	13
		%	15.4%	23.1%	61.5%	100%
Part 2	Second speech with Louisa		5	23	4	32
		%	15.6%	71.9%	12.5%	100%
Part 3	With Bounderby		8	23	3	34
		%	32.53%	6.65 %	8.82 %	100%
	Total					79

It is noteworthy that Gradgrind's first speech with Louisa after her marriage is considered the longest among all their conversations. It is also noteworthy that only 13 sentences out of this long conversation are mouthed by Gradgrind. Moreover, these 13 sentences portray how much his personality has changed as shown in Table 3.2.:

Table 3.2. Sentence Types in Gradgrind's First Speech with Louisa after Change

Sentence Type	Total	%
Complex sentences	3	23.10%
Simple sentences	2	15.40%
Minor sentences	8	61.50%
Total	13	100%

Statistics in Table 3.2. are proved to be at variance with those in the previous tables in the pre-change and in-change phases. The majority of sentences are devoted to minor sentences. Complex sentences come second. The percentage of simple sentences is the lowest.

As a result, a number of indications can be made. First, the dictatorial personality of Gradgrind that characterizes most of his speech before has lost its power now. Gradgrind is so lost and defeated that he cannot form a complete sentence. This syntactic fragmentation parallels the psychological uncertainty he experiences. Second, filled with remorse, Gradgrind refrains from using complex sentences in order to give his daughter the chance to unburden herself to him who only listens. So, he either does not want to interrupt her emotional release with long sentences out of his feeling of guilt or is speechless and cannot find the true words out of the shock he experiences. His mind is so busy thinking about his defeat and the collapse of his school of thought that he becomes tongue-tied and wordless. He does not dare to argue now because he figures out the change that his daughter undergoes and that whatever he says will come to naught.

At the beginning of Book the Third, Louisa and Gradgrind begin a process of emotional healing and breaking a new ground in life. Finally, Gradgrind has realized that facts alone cannot grant a person a happy life. Louisa's reproachful words are like a great hard rock that falls upon Gradgrind's head, awakening him from the illusion he used to live in, the illusion of Fact. That is why the day after Gradgrind comes into the room to see Louisa, and he is not at all like his old self. This change is accounted for once we look at table 3.3., where 32 sentences are statistically scrutinized to view the proportions of sentence types in Gradgrind's second speech with Louisa.

Table 3.3. Sentence Types in Gradgrind's Second Speech with Louisa after Change

Sentence Type	Total	%
Complex sentences	23	71.90%
Simple sentences	5	15.60%
Minor sentences	4	12.50%
Total	32	100%

According to Table 3.3., the bulk of Gradgrind's speech (71.9%) is replete with complex sentences. The percentages of the simple sentences and minor sentences are much lower.

It should be noted that the prevalence of complex sentences this time does not imply any dictatorial dominance on the part of Gradgrind as suggested before his change, but it unveils the psychological and emotional complexity and ferment in his heart. This can comport with what Watts (1981, p. 164) maintains about the change in the way Gradgrind speaks with his daughter and with others throughout the novel. He believes that Gradgrind "has passed from *statement, instruction, command* etc. [presented by simple sentences] to *confession* and *plea*, later even to *promise* and *vow* [presented by complex sentences]."

This complexity of emotions reaches its climax here, and it leaks out in the structure and the length of the sentences. Thus, we witness a miscellany of feelings in the complex sentences Gradgrind articulates. They show an assortment of feelings and emotions: a feeling of loss: "The ground on which I stand has ceased to be solid under my feet" (238; bk.3, ch. 1), a feeling of doubt: "The only support on which I leaned, and the strength of which it seemed and still does seem, impossible to question, has given way in an instant" (ibid.), a feeling of shock: "I find the shock of what broke upon me last night, to be very heavy indeed" (239; ibid.), remorse and guilt: "My dear, I have remained all night at my table, pondering again and again on what has so painfully passed between us" (ibid.), lack of self-confidence: "I come to the conclusion that I cannot but mistrust myself" (ibid.), failure: "I have proved my- my system to myself, and I have rigidly administered it; and I must bear the responsibility of its failures" (ibid.), disappointment and despair: "But, if I see reason to mistrust myself for the past, Louisa, I should also mistrust myself for the present and the future" (240; ibid.), and grief and bitterness: "I am an unhappy man to see you thus!" (241; ibid.).

We can conclude that the complex sentences here are not meant to argue or to convince Louisa of something, but they show his regret and sorrow for what the whole matter comes up at the end. They are also intended to express his own acknowledgement of the failure of his rigid system and the triumph of the "wisdom of the Heart" along with the "wisdom of the Head" (240; *ibid.*). This acknowledgement may help unburden him and his daughter and heal the emotional injuries both have faced.

Not only does Gradgrind admit his mistake in front of his daughter, but also in front of his copycat version, Bounderby. Gradgrind's argument with Bounderby, who comes to Stone Lodge to inform the father of his daughter's infidelity, confutes Bounderby's factual ideology. The distribution of sentence types in table 3.4. demonstrates how complex sentences are abundantly used in Gradgrind's favor.

Table 3.4. Sentence Types in Gradgrind's Speech with Bounderby after Change

Sentence Type	Total	%
Complex sentences	23	61.65%
Simple sentences	8	11.13 %
Minor sentences	3	8.82%
Total	34	100%

According to Table 3.4., we recognize that complex sentences abound in Gradgrind's argument. The overuse of sentential complexity here is to justify Louisa's mistake out of his feeling of guilt. He believes that he is the one to blame for what has happened. Therefore, his complex sentences come to persuade Bounderby that Louisa is guiltless, which calls for supporting her, as well as to drag Bounderby's sympathy towards Louisa's case.

Using multiple sentences, Gradgrind starts the persuasion process with providing the whys and wherefores of Louisa's recent attitude: (i) Gradgrind's failure to understand Louisa: "I doubt whether I have understood Louisa" (258; bk.3, ch. 3), (ii) the strict rubric of her education: "I doubt whether I have been quite right in the manner of her education" (*ibid.*), and (iii) the repression of her emotions and femininity: "I think there are qualities in Louisa, which- which have been harshly neglected, and- and a little perverted" (*ibid.*), all assemble to bring about her misfortune and suffering.

Gradgrind hopes that his argument may elicit Bounderby's pity for Louisa so that he "should allow Louisa to remain here on a visit, and be attended by Sissy... who understands her, and in whom she trusts" (259; *ibid.*). Long complex sentences can serve this purpose properly as they have a prolonged effect on the listener. However, Bounderby proves to be callous. Nevertheless, Gradgrind's confrontation with Bounderby may be implicitly a confrontation with his own self. What he intends to say to Bounderby is meant to be said to himself. It takes him many complex sentences to reach the apparent conclusion at the end that they "may all be more or less in the wrong" (260; *ibid.*).

4. Distribution of Sentence Types in All Three Phases

In order to compare and contrast the statistics of sentence types in Gradgrind's speech in the three phases of his dynamicity, the researcher tabulates these data as follows:

Table 4.1. Sentence Types in Gradgrind's Speeches in all Phases of Character Development

Sentence Type	Before Change	During Change	After Change
Simple sentences	45.95%	28.6%	13.1%
Complex sentences	37.83%	55.8%	62 %
Minor sentences	16.22%	15.6%	36.1%
Total	100%	100%	100%

According to the Table 4.1., the simple sentences accounts for the majority of Gradgrind's speech before his change; while the complex sentences constitute most of his speech during and after his change.

Conclusion

To conclude, it is explicit that sentential structure helps picture the change that Gradgrind undergoes. The variety of sentence types which he employs from the beginning of the novel to the end is a testimony to this dynamicity. It is clear that simplicity and directness of sentences contribute, to a great extent, to depict his character before change, a dictatorial straightforward person. However, we can notice that the percentage of simple sentences has decreased during and after change, when he no longer gives direct commands. On the contrary, the percentage of the complex sentences has increased dramatically, which indicates that the sentential complexity plays a vital role in shedding light on Gradgrind's character during change, when he tends to be a persuasive person; as well as after change, when he finally becomes aware of the vital importance of emotions along with facts in life.

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